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THE EUCHARIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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FOREWARD

The modern day Ecumenical Movement within the Christian churches has brought to the surface and cast new light upon the problems of the Christian Eucharist.

Perhaps no subject separates the Christian world today more than the theological interpretation of the Christian Eucharist. If unity is ever to be achieved so that the Church becomes 'one body in Christ', it may well have to come through this channel. Therefore, we should re-examine this fundamental aspect of our faith from its very beginnings in the New Testament instead of standing within our own denominational interpretations and casting aspersions at others.

The oftentimes pusillanimous ceremonial rite, which is celebrated monthly in most Episcopal churches, is a far cry indeed from the New Testament Eucharist done with joyful hearts by the first believers as their central act of worship. We shall see that the Eucharist should be more important in the life of the Episcopal church today.

Our investigation will begin in Chapter I with a study of the Last Supper that Jesus held with His disciples in the upper room on the night before His execution. We see that the essential concepts of the primitive Eucharist were rehearsed then.

In Chapter II we shall investigate what impact the resurrection meals that Christ held with His disciples had on the New Testament Eucharist and how they were the initial cause of the 'joyful' celebration.

In Chapter III we shall see how the two causes of the early 'breaking of bread' (the Last Supper and the resurrection meals) were inter-related and how the early Eucharist depended upon both traditions.

Chapter IV will bring in the Johannine evidence. We shall see that the author of the Fourth Gospel was interested in the Eucharist even though there is no institution of the Last Supper in the Gospel. St. John will show us the importance of the 'Spirit' in the Eucharist and the role it came to play. The descent of the presence of Christ into the elements of bread and wine will also be viewed here.

Finally we shall consider the Pauline concept of the Church as the body of Christ and how this is related to the Last Supper institutional phrase, 'this is my body'.

CHAPTER I

THE LAST SUPPER

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

I Cor. 11:23-25
R.S.V.

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Mark 14:22-25
R.S.V.

And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body."

(Other ancient authorities add.)

"...which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is

the new covenant in my blood."

Luke 22:15-20
R.S.V.

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:26-29
R.S.V.

What was Jesus Christ intending to do at the last supper? What happened that last Thursday night of His life in the upper room? What did Jesus say; what did he mean? Many have sought the answers to these questions, and a myriad number of books have been written in answer to the task. We shall not make this chapter an exhaustive study of all the evidences, but only reach certain decisions from which we may build our understanding of the Eucharist as recorded in the New Testament.

The most recent and comprehensive discussions of the above questions have been recorded by J. Jeremias and A. J. B. Higgins.¹ Although we shall disagree with Jeremias' conclusion that the Last Supper was a passover meal, his

¹J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus; A. J. B. Higgins; The Lord's Supper in the New Testament.

study is nevertheless clear, concise, and consistent. On the other hand, it is indeed unfortunate that A. J. B. Higgins seemingly puts the cart before the horse in his study. He begins by deciding that the last supper was a passover meal and then examines the New Testament evidence. Therefore, when involved in a debatable issue or dispute, he can always resolve the problem he introduces by his last supper-passover equation.

Let us begin by turning to the primary New Testament accounts of the last supper, the Markan Gospel and the first Epistle to the Corinthians. There is little reason to point to any interdependence between them since the differences are patent, but we may inquire as to which is the more primitive and historical by accurate account. On the face of it Paul's treatment seems the more reliable since the First Epistle to the Corinthians was composed from fifteen to twenty years, at least, before the Gospel of Mark.² But, the date of composition does not tell us from when the tradition is dated, and Mark may have been reporting an older tradition than Paul. There are semitisms in the Markan account which would suggest a primitive nature, but St. Mark was not necessarily reporting what was said and done at the

²Maurice Goguel, Jesus and the Origins of Christianity, Vol. II: The Life of Jesus (New York, 1960), p. 445.

last supper.³ His interest, and that of Paul's also, was liturgical and their concern was with the Christian community.

The account of the Last Supper is etiological in character; it is meant to explain a ritual custom, and at the same time to define its character, and determine the manner in which it should be observed. An etiological narrative is not necessarily secondary with reference to the custom with which it is connected. The narratives have been influenced by the liturgical practice and the narrative is complex: there is action and reaction. Just as there is no liturgical development which was not determined by the account of the facts, so there has been no literary development which is not to some extent the reflection of the development of the liturgy.⁴

Was it, however, that Paul intended to record a historical tradition? His account begins with the words: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you..." There has been much debate⁵ as to if Paul is speaking of a vision or a revelation here instead of repeating what he heard directly or indirectly from those who actually took part in the Last Supper with Jesus. The text itself, however, does not prove that this is meant to be viewed as a revelation since the parallelism exists between the words "I received from the Lord" and "I also delivered to you". These phrases would be difficult to understand if the tradition were not

³Neville Clark, An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments (London, 1956), p. 37.

⁴Goguel, p. 444.

⁵Higgins, pp. 25-26, and Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, p. 18. Cf. Krisopp Lake, Beginnings 5, pp. 188-191.

being passed along in the same way it was received. So, it can be seen that the phrase "I received from the Lord" does not exclude the possibility that it was mediated through others, between Paul and the Lord. The tradition it represents could be the memory of what the Lord did and said during the Last Supper with his friends.

Goguel points out three basic differences between the text of Mark and of Paul:

1. To the words: "This is my body," Mark does not add, as Paul does, "for you".

2. Paul gives the same value to the Cup as to the Bread; he omits the eschatological significance which it has in Mark (or at least which it gained afterwards) through these words: "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark XIV. 25).

3. In the Pauline narrative, after Jesus has distributed the bread and the wine, he says: "This do in remembrance of me". The Markan narrative does not mention any command to repeat this gesture.⁶

Goguel feels that these three points make it clear that Paul's account belongs to a stage in the evolution of the tradition which is later than that of the Second Gospel.

Let us examine these differences. Firstly, if Mark had found the words "for you" in the source that he was using, he would have had no reason for omitting them.

Secondly, we note the elimination of the eschatological meaning from the Cup in the First Epistle to the Co-

⁶Goguel, p. 446.

rinthians. It can be shown that Paul was aware of the eschatological character of the Eucharist for in I Cor. XI: 26 he records, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Therefore, the elimination is not due to a fading of the eschatological hope. Can it then be explained by the tendency to use the cup and bread in exact parallelism in order to make them two expressions of the same idea? This would make Paul's revision a secondary element, and the same could be said about his introduction of the command to repeat the rite. Did Paul alter the tradition without being conscious of it and only make something explicit which was already implicit? If so, then, Mark's account is the more primitive.

But, there are a few factors which must be taken into account before reaching such a decision. First of all let us consider the cup saying. The Pauline version is: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," while Mark records: "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many". While the Markan phrase, "which is poured out for many", seems semitic in origin and could very well be based on Isaiah 53:12, it is his phrase, "my blood of the covenant", that causes trouble. Jeremias finds that this phrase cannot be retranslated into Aramaic.⁷ Possibly

⁷Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (New York, 1955), p. 133.

the phrase, "my blood of the covenant", can be understood by a liturgical tendency to parallel the wine, "my blood", with the bread, "my body". Clark follows G. Dalman in pointing out that in Judaism such a phrase would be likely to have reference to circumcision;⁸ therefore the authenticity of this statement is further questioned. However, the Pauline version may well be reliable and consequently explain the mention of the covenant in the Markan account if Mark is dependent upon Paul or the tradition that Paul uses. Higgins, following Lohmeyer, points out the non-Pauline language of Paul's account.⁹ This can be accounted for by Paul's reporting of tradition, which offers further support to the reliability of the Pauline source.

In regard to the absence from Mark of Paul's twice repeated command: "Do this in remembrance of me", Jeremias has pointed out that there "is not a sufficient reason to regard it as unhistorical, for the command to repeat the rite did not necessarily form part of the liturgical formula, since the celebration itself was its fulfillment. On ne recite pas une, on l'exécute."¹⁰

Which, then, of these two traditions is to be preferred, the Markan or the Pauline? Which represents the

⁸Clark, p. 38.

⁹Higgins, p. 26.

¹⁰Jeremias, p. 159.

sayings of Jesus in their more original form? We cannot justifiably say that either the Pauline or Markan version represents the original words of Christ. We have seen that Paul's phrase, "I received from the Lord", does not necessarily mean a special revelation and therefore does not exclude the possibility that the pre-Pauline tradition may have been modified by liturgical usage. Of course the same criticism could be leveled at Mark's version, and as has been pointed out, Mark's phrase, "my blood of the covenant", is less reliable than Paul's phrase, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood".

We reach, then, this conclusion. Modern scholarship, (which includes such men as H. Lietzman, F. J. Leenhardt, J. Jeremias, M. Goguel, A. J. B. Higgins, and N. Clark) cannot reach a collective decision on the issue. There are problems involved with claiming that either the Pauline or Markan is more primitive and neither can be proved conclusively to be more primitive. In truth, neither represents the exact words of Christ at the last supper, and both are modifications of the earliest liturgical usage. Still, it must be noted that Paul's version has a better chance of being reliable.

Now let us consider the Lukan account. The problems here are sources and the relative merits of the shorter and longer texts.¹¹ The prevailing tendency is to attribute

¹¹Luke 22:15-19a; Luke 22:15-20.

primacy to the longer and best attested text, and the more general consensus of opinion is that the Markan Gospel is St. Luke's primary source.¹² This we shall side with.

It has been suggested that perhaps "the Bezan editor, puzzled by the apparent double mention of the Cup, struck out the second mention of it without caring for the inverted order of the institution thus produced".¹³ On the other hand, Higgins proposes that St. Luke combined two traditions, the one containing verses 15-19a and the other, verses 19a-20.¹⁴ The fact remains that the first of the two cups was not regarded by St. Luke as eucharistic regardless of whichever of these two views be adopted.

Still, we come no closer to the exact words of Jesus, but we must not let this obscure the agreement as to emphasis and meaning. Clark deduces the following order of events from our sources:

1. Jesus gives to his disciples a cup or container of wine of which he speaks in terms of "the fruit of the vine"; Luke 22:17-18; Mark 14:25.

2. Jesus takes bread, blesses, breaks and gives it to his disciples, and says: "This is my body. Do this in remembrance of me"; Mark 14:22; I Cor. 11:24.

¹²S. MacLean, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. III, (New York, 1952), pp. 16-18.

¹³Clark, p. 39. Cf. F. Kenyon and S. C. E. Legg, The Ministry and the Sacraments (ed. R. Dunkerley), p. 285.

¹⁴A. J. B. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (London, 1952), p. 40.

3. Jesus gives thanks, offers to his disciples a second cup, and says: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood (which is to be poured out for the many). Do this (as often as you drink it) in remembrance of me"; Mark 14:23-4; I Cor. 11:25.¹⁵

Now we may turn to our discussion regarding the identification of the last supper. The problem involves the discrepancies between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel. According to the Synoptists the last supper took place at the beginning of the 15th Nisan, which extended from Thursday evening to Friday evening and thereby coincided with the passover. According to St. John the last supper took place at the beginning of the 14th Nisan, twenty-four hours before the passover. Both versions agree that it took place on a Thursday evening.

In recent years Joachim Jeremias and A. J. B. Higgins have both presented strong arguments in favor of the Synoptic chronology and the Markan picture.¹⁶ Higgins lists ten difficulties encountered in accepting the Markan version and then, calling Jeremias to his aid, disposes of all ten problems with great speed and ease.¹⁷ His solutions, however lack forcefulness, and we should carefully re-estimate their validity.

¹⁵Clark, p. 41.

¹⁶Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus; A. J. B. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament.

¹⁷Higgins, pp. 17-20.

We must concede that certain difficulties can be easily dismissed. These would include the lack of mention of the pascal lamb and bitter herbs, the common instead of individual cups, and the use of artos instead of azyma. Also we must realize that later Jewish regulations and accounts cannot necessarily be counted as valid evidence for what could or could not be done at the time of Christ on a festival day. Therefore, it is conjectural to argue against a passover theory with such points as the coming of Simon of Cyrene ap agrou, "from the country" the carrying of arms, the purchase of linen and the burial of Jesus.

Nevertheless, difficulties remain. In Higgins own words:

A contradiction is found in Mark 14:1f (followed by Matt. 26:1-5): "And after two days was the Passover and the Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him. For they said, Not during the feast (me en te eorte), lest there be a tumult of the people." According to the Markan account, however, Jesus was arrested during the feast, on the night of Nisan 15th. This, it is thought, must be a mistake, and it is the indication of time in Mark 14:1f which is correct.¹⁸

Jeremias argues this point by claiming that the words me en te eorte do not bear the meaning usually given them, for pilgrims were already present in Jerusalem several days before the feast. Therefore, the arrest was to be secret, and not openly among the crowd up for the festival "not in the pre-

¹⁸Higgins, p. 17.

sence of the festival crowd.¹⁹ But Clark claims that this explanation seems to be "conjectural in the extreme" for clear support for such a rendering is lacking until Plotinus (Enn. 6, 6, 12). Also he points out that in LXX the phrase regularly carries the meaning: "during the festal season".²⁰

The seven positive points listed by Higgins in favor of the passover theory are not very impressive; nevertheless, they warrant our consideration.

1. The Last Supper took place in the evening and extended into the night. The usual main meal of the day was taken in the late afternoon, but it was obligatory for the Passover to be eaten at night.

2. Jesus and his disciples reclined at their last meal together (Mark 14:18; Matt. 26:20; Luke 22:14; John 13:12, 23, 25, 28), whereas the Jews in the time of Jesus sat at ordinary meals. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt, and it was a Passover ordinance that they should recline as a symbol of their liberty.

3. A dish precedes the breaking of bread only at the Passover. This hors d'oeuvre consists of green herbs, bitter herbs and fruit sauce (haroseth), a mixture of dried fruits, spices, and vinegar. Thus the Mishnah says: "When food is brought before him he eats it seasoned with lettuce, until he is come to the breaking of bread." This preliminary dish is referred to in Mark 14:20 and Matt. 26:23, and the meal is already in progress (Mark 14:18; Matt. 26:21) when Jesus takes bread and offers a blessing and breaks the bread.

4. Wine is drunk at the Last Supper, and the drinking of wine was obligatory at the Passover. That this was an old custom is evident from its being taken for granted in the Book of Jubilees (end

¹⁹Jeremias, p. 48.

²⁰Clark, p. 42.

of the second century B.C.), which contains the first mention of it (49:6, 9). Wine was, of course, drunk on other festive occasions, but at the Passover the wine was red. That the wine at the Last Supper was red is proved by the comparison of it with blood of our Lord.

5. The Last Supper concluded with the singing of a hymn (Mark 14:26; Matt. 26:30), which will have been the second part (Pas. 114-115-118) of the Hallel which closed the Passover meal.

6. After the meal Jesus did not return, according to his custom, to Bethany, but went to the Mount of Olives. This was in accord with the Passover regulation that after the Passover had been eaten within the walls of Jerusalem, the rest of the night might be spent inside a larger area which excluded Bethany but included Gethsemane.

7. A suggestion of considerable force is that the very fact that Jesus spoke of his body and blood in connection with the bread and wine is an indication of the Passover character of the Last Supper, because in the Passover Haggadah the person presiding explained the various elements in the meal. Not that the words of institution replaced these customary explanations; rather they were suggested by them. They were spoken at the distribution of the bread and wine, while the Passover Haggadah preceded the meal proper.²¹

Such considerations as the time of the last supper, the reclining position of the participants, the hors d'oeuvre prior to the breaking of bread, the drinking of red wine and the concluding hymn, hardly seem proofs that the last supper was a passover because, although they are considerations in harmony with passover routine, they are not exclusive to it since these patterns are reflected in other meal forms. Higgins' statement that: "... the wine at the Last Supper

²¹Higgins, pp. 20-21. (See Higgins for further citations.)

was red is proved by the comparison of it with blood by our Lord", is pure academic frivolity. According to Clark, Higgins' statement that: "a dish precedes the breaking of bread only at the Passover", can be countered by reference to the Mishnah Berakoth and Tosephta Berakoth.²² However, Oesterley has shown that the compilation of these writings is approximately A.D. 200²³ perhaps reflecting earlier tradition, but not necessarily; therefore Clark's criticisms are not necessarily valid.

When considering the evidence of the Fourth Gospel, Higgins concludes: "...that while the fourth evangelist, for theological reasons, antedates the chronology by twenty-four hours, he depends on a tradition (or traditions) which agrees with the Synoptics in regarding the Last Supper as a Passover, and in placing the crucifixion on Nisan 15th".²⁴ This bold claim is based on the following evidence compiled by Higgins and Jeremias.²⁵

1. In John 19:31 the Sabbath which was a "high day" was Nisan 16th, the occasion of the offering of the omer.

2. The fact that the disciples thought the hasty de-

²²Clark, p. 43.

²³W. O. E. Oesterley, The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy (Oxford, 1925), p. 32.

²⁴Higgins, p. 23.

²⁵Higgins, pp. 22-3; Jeremias, pp. 54-5.

parture of Judas was in order to give something to the poor is a possible reference to almsgiving at the passover.

3. In John 19:42 paraskeue means Friday, in John 19:31 paraskeue possibly means Friday, and in John 19:14 paraskeue tou pasch may mean "Friday of passover week".

These are slender grounds for his conclusion, and further we must note that the Johannine chronology is "not disputed by St. Paul and is supported by Jewish and perhaps by early Christian tradition".²⁶

Since the Passover is so literally fraught with difficulties, can we perhaps find a more readily adaptable solution? W. O. E. Oesterley proposed a passover kiddush theory to explain the last supper.²⁷ The kiddush was merely a sanctifying prayer said over a cup of wine by the head of a household at a sabbath or festal meal. The last supper took place on a Thursday evening, but the kiddush took place on Friday evening and was not movable; for it occurred after the feast began. As F. Cirlot has pointed out,²⁸ the kiddush was only a day-blessing over a common cup either at the beginning or at the end of the meal; and therefore, the passover would include the kiddush, for kiddush was one of

²⁶Clark, p. 44.

²⁷Oesterley, p. 167f.

²⁸Felix L. Cirlot, The Early Eucharist (London, 1939), p. 7f.

the four cups at passover.

It has also been propounded, by Felix Cirlot and others that the last supper may possibly have been an ordinary haburah meal. According to this theory Jesus and his disciples formed a religious fellowship (haburah) of the type of the Jewish haburoth, which are said to have held weekly meals. This theory is dismissed by Jeremias with the following statements:

And finally, when H. Lietzman, who is followed by K. G. Goetz, R. Otto, and Dom Gregory Dix, refers to "the Jewish meals endowed with a religious benediction, which might always be held with a group of friends, whenever they desired to do so", here too there has been an ad hoc conjecture of a custom for the existence of which evidence is totally lacking. "Religious benediction" was given to every meal--irrespective of whether it was taken alone or in company or of whether it was a mere snack or a formal meal--by saying grace. Mention is indeed made occasionally of "fellowships", when ritual meals are referred to; but these "fellowships" were, "fellowships to perform some special duty", and as for the meals in which they took part, the point is that they were duty meals, as at a betrothal or a wedding, or at neral, where participation was considered meritorious. That these fellowships, which moreover were of a charitable nature, or other "communities of friends" met at any time "when they deemed it necessary" to hold a ritual--let alone a sacral-meal, cannot be proved.²⁹

There, indeed, are faults with the haburah theory, but we must not fail to consider the evidence gathered on its behalf. Dix draws for us a reliable picture of the form that a haburah meal would have taken during Christ's life-

²⁹Jeremias, pp. 25-26.

time.

No kind of food was partaken of without a preliminary "giving of thanks"--a blessing of God for it, said over that particular kind of food when it was first brought to the table. ...Each kind of food was blessed once only during the meal, the first time it appeared. ...Hor d'oeuvres, or "relishes" as the rabbis called them, might be served before the meal proper began, and over these each guest said the blessing for himself, for they were not yet reckoned "one company". If wine were served with these, it was likewise blessed by each one for himself. But, once they had "reclined" for the meal proper, the blessings were said by the host or leader alone for all, except in the case of wine.

After the "relishes", if such were served (which were not counted as part of the meal) the guests all washed their hands, reciting meanwhile a special benediction.

At all Jewish meals (including the haburah supper) this grace took always the following form. The head of the household, or host, or leader of the haburah, took bread and broke it with the words, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who bringest forth bread from the earth." He then partook of a fragment himself and gave a piece to each person at table.

The meal itself followed, each fresh kind of food being blessed by the host or leader in the name of all present the first time it appeared. By an exception, if wine were served at the meal, each person blessed his own wine-cup for himself every time it was refilled with the blessing, "Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who createst the fruit of the vine."

At the close of the meal an attendant brought round a basin and a napkin (and sometimes scent) and hands were washed again.

Finally came the grace after meals--"the Blessing" or "Benediction" as it was called, without further description... This was a long prayer said by the host or father of the family in the name of all who had eaten of the meal. ...on any important family occasion, and at the haburah supper in par-

ticular, a little solemnity was added by its being recited over a special cup of wine (which did not receive the usual wine blessing)... At the end of "the Thanksgiving" this was sipped by whoever had recited the prayer and then handed round to each of those present to sip. Finally, at a haburah supper, the members sang a psalm, and then the meeting broke up.³⁰

This haburah meal would seem to fit in quite well with the order of events which we earlier adopted from Neville Clark. Perhaps Cirlot is right in claiming that the last supper betrays all the signs of the haburah meal. However, if it is the last of a series of meals which Christ ate together with his disciples, we should be careful not to try and make the New Testament evidence "fit" into the haburah pattern. There are many weaknesses to this theory also and Clark explores the major ones:

The actual expression "cup of blessing" does not in fact occur in Rabbinic literature until as late as the Babylonian Talmud, and even then it appears not as a common cup but as one retained by the leader, the rest of the company each having his own chalice. But there are deeper weaknesses. For the evidence adduced for the haburoth comes entirely from the Talmud, and gives no grounds for the assumption that the haburah meal was of a specifically religious character. Apart from this, the only relevant information we possess as to the existence of religious groups distinguishing themselves by the name of haberim demands of us a definition of a haburah in terms of a company concerned with strict observations of the Law.³¹

These criticisms will keep us from concluding that the last supper was a haburah meal in the strictest sense.

³⁰Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape The Liturgy (Glasgow, 1947), pp. 51-52.

³¹Clark, p. 47.

Still Dix's thesis has been helpful to our understanding of the last supper, and so, we should perhaps call attention to his own statement that: "Those who disbelieve in the existence of this earlier type of haburoth have only to omit the word from this chapter and accept the regulations cited as governing any rather formal evening meal in a pious Jewish household; and they will not, I think, then disagree with their application to the last supper in the form here put forward".³²

We see then that the majority of the evidence points to the fact that the last supper was an ordinary Jewish meal. We cannot objectively identify the last supper with a pass-over, kiddush or haburah meal although our investigation of each has shed much light on what actually happened the night of the last supper. Surely passover ideas were in the minds of the disciples, but the full theological significance of the last supper cannot be deduced from the passover, and although the haburah provides us with a possible form and structure, yet the content was something entirely new; new wine requires new wineskins.

³²Dix, p. 50, n. 2.

CHAPTER II

THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES AND THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

For where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.

Matt. 18:20
R.S.V.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, Why are you troubled and why do questionings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have."

And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish,

and he took it and ate before them.

Luke 24:28-43
R.S.V.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.

John 21:9-13
R.S.V.

To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said "you heard from me..."

Acts 1:3-4
R.S.V.

And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:42
R.S.V.

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.

Acts 2:46
R.S.V.

...but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank

with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 10:40-41
R.S.V.

On the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; but he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Acts 20-7
R.S.V.

And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.

Acts 20-11
R.S.V.

If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!

I Corinthians 16:22
R.S.V.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20
R.S.V.

"If you can make one heap of all your winnings/And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,/And lose, and start again at your beginnings/And never breathe a word about your loss..."

The above statement, from Rudyard Kipling's classic poem, "If", accurately describes the disciples' attitude immediately following the crucifixion of Christ. They had indeed made one heap of all their winnings and risked it on one thing. They had left behind their homes and occupations in order to literally bet their lives on the fact

that the man Jesus was the long expected Messiah. But they had lost the bet--their leader, the man Jesus, had been captured, tortured, and finally executed. Their own lives were now in jeopardy because they had been connected with the man Jesus. They had denied Him and gone into hiding. The disciples were planning their own new beginnings, and they were not breathing a word about their loss. This was the situation on the day following the crucifixion of their leader.

We are all well aware of the next turn of events--the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. These events have changed the course of human history for all time, and it is to them that we now turn. Our consideration of the resurrection appearances will have to do with what took place between Christ and the disciples at the appearances and what that has to do with the Eucharist in the New Testament.

Neither the recollection of the Last Supper nor the recollection of the daily meals taken with Jesus during His lifetime can explain the joy which filled the hearts of the first believers, united for the "breaking of bread" as described in Acts 2:46. The thought of the Last Supper and the daily meals with Jesus would have no doubt saddened the hearts of the disciples had it not been for another group of meals taken with Christ. The meals I refer to are those which occurred after the death of Jesus, meals during which Christ suddenly appeared to them and ate with them.

In order to thoroughly explore this idea let us examine the biblical passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The first Easter evening, we read in Luke 24, Christ made His presence known to two disciples during a meal at Emmaus. "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight." The validity of this account has indeed been questioned, and it has been suggested that this story should perhaps belong to the traditions of the primitive Christian community rather than the life of Christ.³³ Still, it is not enough to examine the influence of the primitive cult and its worship, on the accounts of Christian origins. We must also, and perhaps firstly, examine the origins of worship in the events which the accounts record.

In this story we find the two essential elements that we shall note in the resurrection appearances: the presence of Christ and the fellowship of those who experienced that presence at a meal.

The connection between the supper at Emmaus and the early Eucharist is denied by many scholars, and when it is made, often it is suggested that the primitive Eucharist

³³Francis Wright Beare, The Earliest Records of Jesus (New York, 1962), p. 244.

gave rise to the resurrection accounts.³⁴ Following this line of thinking, W. N. Pittenger feels that because Jesus had often presided at such religio-social meals; "his way of doing this, his actions, and his words were so distinctive that they could be remembered as being uniquely and peculiarly his."³⁵ But Cirlot claims that this supper could not have been a Eucharist at all, "for the officiant is represented as being a stranger...and it is hard to suppose such an one would be allowed to preside or be represented as presiding at the Eucharist."³⁶ But it can be seen that these scholars are arguing from the point of view that the Eucharist was at that time in existence, which it wasn't; they are putting the cart before the horse.

A. R. C. Leaney points out that it was at Emmaus that "their fellowship with Jesus, broken by his death, was restored".³⁷ That is what gave rise to the Eucharist, and there is the linking of the Resurrection with the Eucharist.

In Luke 24:36 the eleven ate with the Risen Christ,

³⁴Oscar Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper (London, 1958), p. 9.

³⁵W. Norman Pittenger, The Christian Sacrifice (New York, 1951), p. 33.

³⁶Cirlot, p. 236.

³⁷A. R. C. Leaney, The Gospel According to St. Luke (New York, 1958), p. 293.

and we note here that the meal consists of fish as in the narrative in John 21:9-13. Cullmann thinks that this may to some extent account for the fact that "later the symbol of the fish was associated with the Eucharist, though the symbol certainly has other roots besides this."³⁸

Once we see that the first appearances of the Risen Christ took place during meals, we can begin to understand the position that the first eucharistic feasts of the primitive community looked back to the Easter meals. This explains the joy involved in those feasts. These eucharistic feasts also anticipated the Messianic Meal promised by Jesus at the Last Supper. That the thought of resurrection is associated with the Easter meals is shown in Peter's talk in Acts 10:40-41: "...God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." There are other features we should also note in this passage. One is that it seems to be a characteristic feature of the appearances that they took place during a meal. Secondly, the phrase: "made him manifest"; present, at these meals. Thirdly, it should be noted that the witnesses "ate and drank with him"; they did not eat and drink Christ. Fourthly, we note that he was not made manifest to all people, but only to those he ate with. The

³⁸Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, p. 15.

associations here with the Eucharist are obvious.

In Acts 2:42, Acts 2:46, Acts 20:7, and Acts 20:11, we read of the "breaking of bread", but no mention is made of anything to drink. We have noted in the first chapter that the Last Supper was an ordinary meal, and here we shall decide if the eucharistic meals of the first Christians were not in fact ordinary meals. There is indeed much evidence to support this fact.

In the early traditions of Judaic Christianity, preserved in Pseudo-Clementines, the Lord's Supper was celebrated with bread and salt. Because of this the expression metalabein tōn alōn, "to share salt", became the technical term for "to celebrate the Lord's Supper."³⁹ Acts 1:3-4 speaks in these terms too, for the participle synalizomenos is wrongly translated. It is often translated "was assembled together with them" or "while staying with them", but its more precise meaning would be: "He took salt with them". The ancient Latin, Coptic, and Syriac translations must have understood it in this way, since they render it: "to eat together".⁴⁰ Therefore, we see the author of Acts, when speaking of the appearances of the Risen Christ to the disciples, uses the phrase "to take salt together". Hence, we note that here is another meal shared by the resurrected

³⁹Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, p. 15.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 16.

Christ and the disciples.

The possibility that the early Eucharist was celebrated with bread and fish also exists. If the meals with the Risen One set a precedent for the Eucharist, then we can understand why the ancient symbol of the fish was sometimes considered as a eucharistic symbol. In Luke 24:43 the Risen Christ eats fish with the eleven, and in John 21, after the miraculous catch; "Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish." The role of the fish as a eucharistic symbol is found another place in the Fourth Gospel. In the sixth chapter of John, after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the discourse of Jesus contains allusions to the Eucharist.⁴¹

So it appears likely that the eucharistic meals of the first Christians were in fact ordinary meals. If so, then what were the characteristic features of these meals?

The Christian community celebrated its meals "with joy" in the apostolic age. We have noted that the meals were linked with the Risen One, and the certainty of the resurrection was no doubt an essential religious motive of the primitive Lord's Supper. The presence of the Risen Christ was experienced in the midst of the assembly of the faithful, in a non-material form, each time they united for

⁴¹C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London, 1958), p. 235.

a common meal. The presence the disciples experienced was comparable with that of Easter, and the disciples regarded these meals as a continuation of the Easter meals.

When they assembled to break bread, they knew that the Risen One would reveal His presence in a manner less visible, but no less real than previously.

The gatherings of the early Church had an enthusiastic character. We know from St. Paul that the phenomenon of glossalalia accompanied them: and that presupposes an especially intense feeling of Christ's presence in the midst of the assembly. The recollection of the appearance of the Risen One and the cultic experience of His presence were united in the closest way in the eucharistic meals, which were regarded as the continuation of the first Christian meals at Easter. Thus, the Lord's presence was re-experienced during these love-feasts, both as a recollection of the historical fact of the Resurrection and as an experience of the contemporary fact of His invisible coming in the gathering of Christians assembled "to break bread".

To the historical fact and to the contemporary fact it is necessary to add as a characteristic of the experience of the presence evoked by the Eucharist, the eschatological fact. The Lord appeared to the disciples after His death, while they were eating; He appears now in the cultic meal of the community; He will appear soon for the Messianic Banquet. This third motif must have been connected, in the closest fashion, with the other two in the minds of the faithful assembled to make Christ present.⁴²

Revelation 3:20 points to the connection between the presence of the Risen Christ at the meals and the future Messianic Banquet. The Seer on Patmos hears the kingly Christ assert: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if

⁴²Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper, pp. 12-13.

any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." This eschatological statement again relates the union with Christ in the form of a meal. Also, we note once again that the faithful eat with Christ; they do not eat Christ.

Here our attention should be drawn to the early Christian prayer found in I Corinthians 16:22: "If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. (Maranatha) Our Lord come!" Lietzmann and Schweitzer have suggested that within its context this prayer seems to have been taken over from a eucharistic liturgy.⁴³ This was such an early prayer that it was actually handed down in its Aramaic form. It possesses both an eschatological and a present sense. D. M. Baillie comments that it, "meant at the same time 'come and grant us now Thy presence in our worship' and 'come in power and glory', so that the note of eschatology were blended in one".⁴⁴ The Didache shows the extraordinarily important role which this oldest liturgical prayer of the early Christian community must have played. It was particularly said at the end of a meal and in connection with the eucharistic liturgy.⁴⁵

⁴³Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper, p. 13, n. 3.

⁴⁴Donald M. Baillie, The Theology of The Sacraments and Other Papers (New York, 1957), p. 105.

⁴⁵Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, p. 13.

Hans Lietzmann explains that the disciples re-experienced the Risen Christ at their meals:

Their experience when the Risen Lord had appeared to them, still made their hearts throb if they looked with much yearning for His final return visible to all the world; yet they also knew that He, who had risen from the dead, came close to His own, though invisible, whenever two or three were gathered together in His name.

It was at this point that their table fellowship won its deeper significance.

Whenever the disciples gathered for a meal in accordance with Jewish custom, and one of them pronounced a blessing over the bread, they recalled the happy days when the Master had formerly blessed and broke the bread for them. He returned to them, and they became conscious of His presence. The story of the disciples of Emmaus echoes this sense marvelously. Again, the knowledge of the presence of Jesus and the secret happiness of possessing the highest divine grace made the simplest meal in the rudest hut a foretaste of the heavenly banquet which the Lord would celebrate with His own at the Messianic table. Hence, in the first church, the bread was broken "with gladness and praise", and the yearning prayer "Maranatha i.e. "Come, O our Lord" alternated with the Messianic "Hosanna"; present and future were woven into a single fabric.

In this way the first church was held together by the fact that all its members shared the experience of the presence of the Risen Lord.⁴⁶

Cullmann stresses that: "Christ is not yet regarded as descending into the elements, but His coming, His presence, is none the less 'real', to employ a dogmatic term. It is realized immediately, but apart from the elements.

⁴⁶Hans Lietzmann, The Beginning of The Christian Church (London, 1949), pp. 63-64.

Christ comes to eat with the community of believers, and His presence is understood to be as real as possible."⁴⁷

D. M. Baillie illuminates this presence with Christ that the faithful experienced at the early eucharistic meals by reference to Gabriel Marcel's Gifford lectures on the true meaning of the preposition 'with'.

He (Marcel) points out that 'with' properly indicates an 'intersubjective relationship', a spiritual relationship between persons, and not a mere juxtaposition in space. Thus it does not apply at all to a world of objects. A chair may be alongside a table, and beside a table, but not really with the table in the true sense. And there may even be two persons together in a room without their being in more than a minimal way with each other, because they are not encountering each other in a genuine relationship. So 'We can... have a very strong feeling that somebody who is sitting in the same room as ourselves, sitting quite near us, someone whom we can look at and listen to and whom we could touch if we wanted to make a final test of his reality, is nevertheless more distant from us than some loved one who is perhaps thousands of miles away or perhaps, even, no longer among the living. We could say that the man sitting beside us was in the same room as ourselves, but that he was not really present there, that his presence did not make itself felt.' Marcel is not thinking at all of sacramental doctrine, but these thoughts seem to me to be most relevant to the question of the real presence in the sacrament.⁴⁸

Earlier in our study we noted two essential elements: the presence of Christ and the fellowship to those who experienced that presence at a meal. Now we should say another word about the fellowship of the table companions with one another. Although it is true that some early Chris-

⁴⁸ Baillie, pp. 98-99.

tians experienced individual visions, (i.e. St. Paul), yet the type of collective vision was that which they experienced at a common meal. This fellowship was realized by the presence of Christ experienced by the assembly gathered together for the Eucharist. In this connection Matt. 18:20 takes on additional meaning: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And the statement can be reversed so that: "where Christ is present, there is the fellowship of the faithful gathered together."⁴⁹ The disciples gathered for the Eucharist to experience the presence of Christ and found also a strong union with each other.

We conclude then that the Risen Lord's Easter meals were the initial cause of the early Eucharist. The Last Supper had been a rehearsal for the Easter meals and the Messianic Banquet. If there had been no resurrection appearances then the Eucharist would have been celebrating only a condemned prisoner's last meal. And if that is what they were celebrating, then they should have been doing it on Thursday and not the Lord's Day, Sunday. The Lord's Day is not Thursday (last supper) or Friday (crucifixion), but Sunday (resurrection). The Easter Sunday meals were the immediate cause and gave rise to the earliest Eucharist. Holy week is the only week in the year when we celebrate

⁴⁹Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper, p. 16.

Maundy Thursday (last supper), Good Friday (sacrifice), and Easter Sunday (resurrection). The rest of the year we do the Eucharist on the Lord's Day of resurrection--Sunday.

We shall now turn to investigate the unification of the last supper and the resurrection meals.

CHAPTER III

AGAPE -- EUCHARIST

when you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me". In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another--if any one is hungry, let him eat at home--lest you come together to be condemned. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

I Corinthians 11:20-34
R.S.V.

In Messe und Herrenmahl Hans Lietzmann points out two main primitive types of liturgy.⁵⁰ The liturgy of St. Hippolytus, dating from the third century, centers around the death of Christ and uses the Words of Institution as found in St. Paul and the Synoptists. The other is the ancient Egyptian liturgy found in the Serapion, dating from the fourth century. The Serapion goes back to the Didache, which is the most ancient Christian liturgy known and has no Words of Institution or reference to the death of Christ, but stresses the return of the Lord and the fellowship of the faithful. This ancient Egyptian liturgy, Lietzmann thinks, can be traced back to the 'Jerusalem type' Eucharist as recorded in Acts. According to Lietzmann's theory the raison d'etre of the Jerusalem type Eucharist was the daily fellowship meals which Jesus ate with the disciples during His lifetime, while the St. Hippolytus liturgy derives its origin from St. Paul. Lietzmann claims that Paul, as the real creator, transformed the already existing Hellenistic sacramental Eucharist. This Paul did because of a special revelation which revealed to him the primary and essential meaning of the Lord's Supper as a memorial of Christ's death.

We must disagree with Lietzmann. Paul could not have

⁵⁰G. H. C. MacGregor, Eucharistic Origins, A Survey of the New Testament Evidence (London, 1928), pp. 112-113.

been the originator of the type of Eucharist which was predominantly a feast in memory of Christ's death, because firstly the Words of Institution belonged to a tradition he had received. A tradition he had received from men and not by special revelation as we discussed in the first chapter.

Paul received the tradition of the Last Supper and knew of the way in which the Eucharist was being celebrated at Corinth. Therefore, he introduced reforms into the eucharistic celebrations at Corinth. He had discovered that the celebrations had degenerated into exhibitions of selfishness and drunkenness and were no longer Lord's Suppers. In order to right these wrongs Paul ordered the Corinthians to take necessary nourishment in their homes before coming to the gathering (I Cor. 11:22,34). Thereby Paul made the first move towards the transformation of a real meal (Agape), which included the eucharistic remembrance of the Lord's death and the prayer for His return, into a purely cultic celebration (Eucharist).

We can say that our line of approach differs from that of Lietzmann in two important ways.

1. We do not find the direct origin of the Jerusalem 'breaking of bread' (as in Acts) in the daily common meals of Jesus with his disciples, but in the resurrection appearance meals of the Lord with his disciples.

2. Lietzmann denies that there is any connection between the Jerusalem type meal and the Last Supper, but we regard the Last Supper as the common origin of both types of Eucharist, the Jerusalem type Eucharist having two origins, the Last Supper and the resurrection meals.

Cullmann makes the bold statement that, "in the Lord's Supper, as observed by the primitive community, there is not the slightest trace of the essential ideas expressed by Jesus on that occasion", (the Lord's Supper).⁵¹ This is a statement which we shall not adhere to, for the Lord's Supper was a rehearsal for the resurrection meals and more especially for the Messianic Banquet. Therefore, the Last Supper contained all the essential ideas expressed in the Eucharist of the primitive community, even though it may not have been the immediate cause, in the minds of the disciples, of the earliest Eucharist.

The idea of remembrance of Christ's death was no invention of Paul's. It existed before him, present in both the Palestinian and Hellenistic communities, but because of conditions he stressed the idea and thereby brought about the beginnings of the separation of 'Agape' and 'Eucharist'. We agree with A. J. B. Higgins when he points out that:

It is very probable, especially in view of the dependence of both so-called types of Eucharist on

⁵¹Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper, p. 14.

the Last Supper, that what Paul did was to lay a renewed emphasis on the remembrance of the death of Christ which was already present, but which at Corinth was in danger of being forgotten - not to mention brotherly generosity and good manners. In seeking to correct these abuses by counselling the hungry to eat at home first, Paul took the initial step in the separation of the specifically eucharistic celebration from the meal of which it formed part; and this celebration, consisting, of 'this bread' and 'the cup of the Lord' (I Cor. 11:27), was to 'proclaim the Lord's death until he comes',⁵²

In the second chapter we noted that the primitive Lord's Supper was characterized by two things: the presence of Christ and the fellowship of those who experienced that presence. In regard to the presence of Christ, Paul stressed that it is not only the Risen One who reveals Himself to the faithful at the Eucharist, but also the Crucified One. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (I Cor. 11:26) Also by stressing Christ's words--This is my body, this is my blood--Paul paved the way for the theological concept that Christ is present in the elements.

In regard to the eucharistic fellowship we note that by re-emphasizing Jesus' words about the new covenant, established by His death, Paul sobered the fellowship by reminding them of their *raison d'etre* and no doubt strengthened their unity by virtue of more theological awareness.

It is not our intention in this study to go beyond

⁵²Higgins, p. 63.

the New Testament, but it is interesting to note the happenings which eventually brought about the complete separation of agape and eucharist. While adhering to our line of thinking concerning the agape-eucharist found in the New Testament, Neville Clark provides an adequate summary of the eventual separation.

From the narrowly eucharistic standpoint we must say that the last supper was a meal within a meal, that at its very institution the eucharist was set within a larger framework. Hence, we shall not be surprised to find that 'the breaking of bread', which the Book of Acts records, is evidently a common religious meal--in later terms, an agape-eucharist. The practice looks back to the last supper, but to the last supper via the post-resurrection meals of Christ with his disciples, from which its exuberant joy is in part derived. But when the Church became predominantly Gentile, the possibility of grave abuses became an ever-present danger; and the reforms in the practice of the Corinthian Church which Paul was forced to initiate foreshadowed a separation of agape and eucharist, closely associated with a renewed emphasis on the primary significance of the eucharistic rite. Roman restrictions and suspicions, to which Pliny bears witness, accelerated an almost inevitable development, and help to account for the disappearance of the agape in the circles of Justin and Irenaeus. Consequently, when the logic of events forced a change in Roman policy and with Tertullian and Hippolytus, Clement, Origen, and Cyprian, the agape or Lord's supper re-emerged, it did so as a separate meal. The break between agape and eucharist was complete.⁵³

⁵³Clark, p. 59.

CHAPTER IV

ST. JOHN AND THE EUCHARIST

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal." Then they said to him "What must we do, to be doing the work of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who see the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me

draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and then died. This is the bread which comes from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever." This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

Many of his disciples, when they heard it said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should betray him. And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have

words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him.

John 6:26-71
R.S.V.

It should be noted at the outset of our study of St. John and the Eucharist that we shall not be primarily interested in such concerns as the dating of the Gospel. We shall not become involved in a major concern with the problem of redactors, but will take the Gospel as it is, knowing that the whole Gospel was indeed a product of the early church.

The question of whether or not the fourth evangelist was even interested in the Eucharist naturally arises since the last supper is absent from the Gospel. During the course of this chapter we shall see that the Eucharist was a major concern of St. John's, but here we should note that some feel that St. John was even an anti-sacramentalist. Rudolf Bultmann, in his commentary Das Evangelium des Johannes claims that the fourth evangelist has a negative attitude towards the Eucharist.⁵⁴ Bultmann thinks that an ecclesiastical redactor brought the Gospel into line with the cur-

⁵⁴Higgins, p. 74. Cf. Das Evangelium des Johannes, 1950, p. 360.

rent usage and teaching in the Church.⁵⁵

W. F. Howard points out that the two main reasons writers have not recognized the sacraments in John have been that they thought certain words would have been anachronisms on the lips of Jesus or that John's religion was purely "spiritual", thereby stressing faith so that material (i.e. bread, wine, water) would be contradictory.⁵⁶

Howard personally feels that; "in view of the widespread sacramentalism of contemporary religious movements in the Graeco-Roman world the writer could not fail to know that such an interpretation must be put upon his language."⁵⁷

Pittenger thinks that the sixth chapter is definitely a long meditation on the Eucharist,⁵⁸ while Grafton tells us that St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and St. Cyril thought likewise.⁵⁹ Grafton also points out that the third General Council held at Ephesus, A.D. 431, referred to the discourse in the sixth chapter as having to do with the Eucharist and that (among others) the Anglicans, Hooker, Andrews, and

⁵⁵W. F. Howard, Christianity According to St. John (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 144.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 144.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 143.

⁵⁸Pittenger, p. 45.

⁵⁹Charles Grafton, The Holy Eucharist in the New Testament (New York, 1914), p. 99.

Wordsworth held this view.⁶⁰

If the fourth evangelist is concerned with the Eucharist, then why is there no institution of the last supper in the Gospel? C. H. Dodd comments that:

It is certainly a remarkable fact that the writer who must every Sunday of his life have taken part in a meal directly intended to recall that solemn Supper should, in giving to the world his interpretation of the life of Christ in its eternal significance, have recorded the last meal of Jesus with His disciples without a hint of the ceremonial and symbolic element which the Church had piously perpetuated from its earliest period.⁶¹ Here is a phenomenon that calls for explanation.

There have been many explanations offered to account for this absence, and here we should review a few of them. Goguel rejects the theory that the absence of an account of the Last Supper can be explained by the accidental loss of a page because there is no indication of a gap or joining where the Last Supper should be found.⁶²

It has been suggested by Bernhard Weiss that John felt it unnecessary to repeat what was already recorded by Paul and the Synoptics.⁶³ Macgregor and Goguel reject this view by asking why, if it were a true view, did not the

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 99.

⁶¹Macgregor, p. 213. Cf. C. H. Dodd, The Expositor, December, 1911, p. 531.

⁶²Goguel, p. 460.

⁶³Ibid., p. 461. Cf. B. Weiss: Johev. (Meyer, II⁸), Gottingen, 1893, p. 469.

evangelist omit the whole passion story?⁶⁴ Grafton believes that John did not record the words of Institution because that had already been done, but recorded instead Jesus' discourses explaining the Eucharist.⁶⁵ Along the line of this thinking is the view of E. Lohmeyer that John does not associate the last supper with the Institution of the Eucharist, but instead the feeding of the multitude.⁶⁶ This would no doubt fit in well with Lietzmann's theory of two distinct types of meals, but Lietzmann's theory we rejected in chapter three, and consequently, we cannot accept Lohmeyer's views here.

Oskar Holtzmann has suggested that enough was said about the Eucharist in chapter six (feeding of the multitude and discourse on the bread of life) so that when John wrote chapter thirteen he did not feel it necessary to return to the subject.⁶⁷ But, the problem arises precisely because John discusses the Eucharist in chapter six and not in chapter thirteen.

W. L. Knox suggests that John was silent about the

⁶⁴Macgregor, p. 213; Goguel, p. 461.

⁶⁵Grafton, p. 95.

⁶⁶Higgins, p. 74. Cf. E. Lohmeyer, 'Das Abendmahl in der Urgemeinde' in Journal of Biblical Literature, LVI, 1937, p. 249.

⁶⁷Goguel, p. 461. Cf. Oskar Holtzmann: Lebne Jesu, p. 67.

institution of the Eucharist (last supper) because he wanted to conceal the knowledge of the sacred formulae of the rite from the uninitiated,⁶⁸ while W. F. Howard feels that:

The teachings about the Lord's Supper is removed from the sacred context of its institution, perhaps because any controversial purpose would be strangely out of place in that hour of sacred fellowship. ...At the end of the first Christian century the church was passing through grave perils. There were those who too easily read into the Christian sacraments ideas which had their home in the altogether different climate of pagan mysteries. Others there were who denied the full historical manifestation of the Incarnate Word, or who disbelieved that Jesus underwent the actual experience of death as a true part of that divine revelation. Over against all these errors there stood the witness of the life of the Church and its sacramental testimony.⁶⁹

Both of these views, Knox's and Howard's, are based on the assumption that the Gospel was written in 100 A.D. or later. In regard to Howard's theory of concealment, Bultmann has pointed out that this motive belonged to a later period.⁷⁰ While Howard's theory of apologetic purpose depends somewhat on date of composition, we shall nevertheless regard it as a possibly valid motive and shall say more about it later. Macgregor rejects the concept of Percy Gardner that John desired a detachment of higher Christian teaching

⁶⁸Higgins, p. 74. Cf. W. L. Knox, Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, 1944, p. 66.

⁶⁹Howard, p. 149.

⁷⁰Higgins, p. 74. Cf. R. Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, 1950, p. 360, n. 4.

(i.e. the Eucharist) from the 'occasion of history', in order to link it with the 'eternal realities' of the purely spiritual world, by claiming that the foot-washing is substituted as the main rite of the last supper.⁷¹ Goguel also feels that the foot-washing incident is a representation of the Eucharist. He comments that:

The statements of Jesus about the importance of the act which he is doing, and the command to repeat it with which it is accompanied, have not given birth in the Church to a veritable sacrament of the washing of the feet... This substitution has been made because, in the mind of the fourth evangelist, the glorification of the Christ is the condition of his redemptive action.⁷²

Macgregor also holds this view and informs us that:

Hardly less significant than the omission is the substitution of the incident of the feet-washing as the central rite at the Supper. What in the other Gospels appears as the observance of a sacramental rite, prefiguring the fully-developed Eucharist of the later Church, becomes a simple agape or love feast, while the words of institution are supplanted by the "new commandment"- "that you love one another."⁷³

In Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs Bruno Bauer proposes that the silence of John is a protest against the chronology of the Synoptic Gospels.⁷⁴ But this

⁷¹Macgregor, p. 213. Cf. Percy Gardner, The Ephesian Gospel, p. 204.

⁷²Goguel, pp. 461-462.

⁷³Macgregor, p. 214.

⁷⁴Goguel, p. 461. Cf. Bruno Bauer Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs, III, p. 195.

hardly seems to explain why the origin of the central rite of Christian worship is entirely absent from the account.

Higgins offers four reasons for the absence of the institution of the sacrament at the Last Supper. (1) John's allusive way of treating the tradition known to him. (2) Apologetic purpose. (3) The Last Supper was a Passover feast, and Christ, as the paschal victim, was not dead yet. (4) John associates the Eucharist with the Incarnation instead of the Passion.⁷⁵

Higgins' first reason we shall except, and his second reason we shall expand, clarify, and demonstrate. His third reason we rejected in the first chapter by concluding that the Last Supper was not a Passover feast. To Higgins' fourth reason that John associates the Eucharist with the Incarnation instead of the Passion, we shall add that the Eucharist becomes possible because of the Passion as we turn to specific passages.

I. The Wedding at Cana 2:1-11

In Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, C. H. Dodd points out that St. John intended a eucharistic reference in the story.⁷⁶ He also asserts that the intention of

⁷⁵Higgins, pp. 75-78.

⁷⁶C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge, 1963), p. 224.

the passage is to set forth a 'sign' by which Christ manifested His glory.⁷⁷ We have the author's word that this is so: "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him."⁷⁸ This is the first of many signs and points forward to Jesus' hour of Passion or glorification when the Eucharist will be possible. Jesus says "My hour has not yet come",⁷⁹ in Cana, but when the hour had come for His Passion and glorification He prayed: "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee..."⁸⁰ "Only then will his blood be outpoured; only then can the Eucharist be instituted".⁸¹ Still this is a 'sign' of His glory, and water which was for 'Jewish rites of purification' can be turned into blood. The symbolism here is obvious and pregnant. With His 'glory' (cross) came the 'blood' (wine), the Eucharist. The water for the 'Jewish rites of purification' is seemingly symbolically replaced here with the Eucharistic wine, which represents the blood of Christ, which cleanses from sin. Thus, we see that for John the Eucharist wine is drinking the blood of Christ.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 223.

⁷⁸John 2:11.

⁷⁹John 2:4.

⁸⁰John 17:1.

⁸¹Clark, p. 52.

II. The Bread of Life, 6:26-71

Macgregor has said that: "the Eucharistic bearing of the chapter is undeniable, the very language being technical and the points in dispute reflecting as usual, the controversies of the Evangelist's own day".⁸² He further feels that: "the significance appears to lie in the association of sacramental ideas not with the circumstances attendant upon Christ's death but with an act of power illustrative of His life--giving grace."⁸³

Directly before this passage is the feeding of the multitude and the discovery of Jesus at Capernaum. This passage consists of the dispute with the Jews in a synagogue, explanations of difficult teaching in order to benefit the doubting disciples, and the contrast between the treachery of Judas and the confession of Peter.

According to the Synoptics the Last Supper was held close to the Passover and during the meal Jesus said that He would be betrayed. In this passage John draws a parallel, and so we read, "Now the Passover... was at hand",⁸⁴ and "Jesus knew from the first... who it was that should betray him".⁸⁵

⁸²Macgregor, p. 215.

⁸³Ibid., p. 215.

⁸⁴John 6:4.

⁸⁵John 6:64.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, we shall not be concerned with the theories of redactors and therefore shall not take up here the question of verses 51b-58 as a redactional addition.⁸⁶ We need say here only that it is the theology of John that the Jesus of history who gives the 'Word' as life and spirit is the same Christ present, as flesh, in the eucharistic bread.

The eschatological promise which is in the recorded Last Supper⁸⁷ and which we have noted earlier as pointing to the Messianic Banquet is not missing from this passage. It can be seen in verses 6:39, 40, 44 as the promise repeated three times that: "I will raise him up at the last day."⁸⁸

The Jews said to Christ, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"⁸⁹ Jesus tells them that Moses did not give them the bread, of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who

⁸⁶See F. Spitta, Zur Geschichte und Litteratur, i, 1893, pp. 216-221.; R. Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, 1950, pp. 161f.; A. J. B. Higgins, op. cit., pp. 80-81.; E. C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel (London, 1947), p. 305.

⁸⁷Mark 14:25.

⁸⁸Higgins, p. 81.

⁸⁹John 6:35.

believes in me shall never thirst".⁹⁰ Jesus himself is the life giving bread: "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world".⁹¹ The fathers ate manna and died, but Jesus says: "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die".⁹² This means that those participating in the Eucharist are sharing the Risen Christ's life.⁹³

Higgins comments that:

The introduction of the manna also corresponds to that looking forward to the Messianic banquet which is an integral part of the Lord's Supper. In the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch it is said of the Messianic age that 'the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high' (2 Baruch 29:8), and it was believed that the Messiah would bring down the manna as Moses did.⁹⁴

Then the Eucharist is presented as in the strongest terms:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.

⁹⁰John 6:35.

⁹¹John 6:33.

⁹²John 6:50. Cf. 6:58.

⁹³Clark, p. 53.

⁹⁴Higgins, p. 82. Cf. Hoskyns, op. cit., p. 293f.

This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.⁹⁵

Higgins tells us that:

The Jews are confronted in the most outspoken language with the belief and the rite which they find abhorrent, and wavering Christians are challenged with the claim that these are indispensable. The bread which Jesus gives now turns out to be his flesh. The Jews misunderstand, thinking that the man they see before them is meant, whereas it is the Christ who is present in the Eucharist. The drinking of the blood would be a still more repugnant idea to them. But it is needful for real life to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, 'for my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink'. The necessity of eating the flesh of the Son of Man is driven home uncompromisingly by the transition to the word 'munch' (trogein) for 'eat' in verses 54, 56-58. It is a real eating that is meant. The Christ at the Eucharist is as real as was his human body.⁹⁶

We have already noted from Howard that there were those within the Church hostile to the Eucharist and that this chapter was to set them straight. We should note also Higgins' indication that: "the sacrament, which has always been misunderstood by Jews, had to be defended against attacks from the side of Judaism. "The Jews in this Gospel are in this respect, as in others, the arch-enemies. The whole discourse in chapter six is an argument with Jewish objectors..."⁹⁷

⁹⁵John 6:53-58.

⁹⁶Higgins, p. 82.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 76.

Hoskyns points out that in this chapter the substituting of Flesh, for Body is the 'natural corollary' to chapter one verse fourteen.⁹⁸ "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." Thus, Carpenter remarks: "'Body' became 'flesh' because the Church was endangered by the denial that Jesus had come in the flesh".⁹⁹ Something unsubstantial and exempt from suffering might have been denoted by 'body'. According to Higgins it might have also been possible that John used a branch of tradition where the eucharistic words were flesh and blood; these would have no doubt been more suitable to his purpose.¹⁰⁰

The Johannine Christ tells us: "This is the bread which came down from heaven...; he who eats this bread will live for ever".¹⁰¹ But what makes this possible? The Johannine Christ proclaims: "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh".¹⁰²

The body of Jesus is given over to death for men that it may be given over as life to men... Eternal life is the fruit of communion with Christ; the eucharist is the means of that communion; the death of Christ makes that communion possible.

⁹⁸Hoskyns, p. 83.

⁹⁹Higgins, p. 83. Cf. J. E. Carpenter, The Johannine Writings, 1927., p. 297.

¹⁰⁰Higgins, p. 83.

¹⁰¹John 6:58.

¹⁰²John 6:51.

But this is hard doctrine and men stumble at it. (John 6:60-61) St. John may not remove the scandal; it is intrinsic to the Christian revelation: he can, however, make clear its ultimate meaning. 'It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail'. (John 6:62) To say this is not to remove the offence by a spiritualization of the sacrament, for it is in and through the flesh that the Spirit works. The parallel between the Christ incarnate and the Christ in the eucharist remains. Just as it is 'the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know', (John 5:42), who is 'the bread which came down from heaven', (John 6:41), so it is in the material bread of the eucharist that the heavenly Christ is known; and those who 'murmur' (John 6:41, 43) at the one offence will 'murmur' (John 6:61) at the other. On the other hand, as it is the heavenly origin of the person of the Incarnate that gives the incarnation its significance, so it is the Spirit which makes the eucharistic loaf living bread. 'What then if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?' (John 6:62) Only when Jesus is glorified can the Spirit be given (John 7:39), for the Spirit is the gift of the ascended Christ. (John 16:7) But, as he who descended from heaven may be found only in the humility of his incarnate life, so he who ascended into heaven may be known only in the 'flesh' of the bread and wine which his Spirit makes life-giving.¹⁰³

III. The Farewell Discourses, 13:31 to 17:26

There are close similarities between the sixth chapter and this discourse which we should note.

<u>Sixth Chapter</u>	<u>Farewell Discourse</u>
1. 'Now the Pass- over,... was at hand.' (John 6:5)	1. 'Now before the feast of Passover...' (John 13:1)

¹⁰³Clark, pp. 53-54.

2. 'Jesus answered them, "Did I choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him. (John 6:70-71)

2. 'And during supper when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,...' (John 13:2)
 "For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'You are not all clean'." (John 13:11)
 "Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:2)

3. "I am the bread of life..."
 (John 6:35)

3. "I am the true vine."
 (John 15:1)

In regard to the "bread" paralleling the "vine", C. H. Hoskyns thinks the eucharistic connection to be consistent:

The close similarity between chs. vi and xv can be adequately explained only if it be recognized that both rest ultimately upon the **double** foundation of the tradition of the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper and the teaching associated with the Eucharist at the time when the gospel was composed.¹⁰⁴

Christ unites the disciples to Himself even as He is united to the Father. "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have

¹⁰⁴Hoskyns, p. 471.

loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34)
 "As the Father has loved me so have I loved you; abide in my love". (John 15:9) "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." (John 15:4)

Clark shows us that the high-priestly prayer of chapter seventeen is the eucharistic prayer. It is:

...the consecration of the Lord, the consummation in word (as in the cross, in deed) of the offering which makes the eucharist possible. Already Christ gives himself as food and drink to his disciples. But in the Johannine theology his prayer is also his ascension to the Father, the counterpart in word of the cross on which he is 'lifted up' in glory, 'that whoever believes in him may have eternal life'. It is that 'ascension' that makes the gift of the Spirit and thus the eucharist possible.¹⁰⁵

One other word in connection with the Farewell Discourses should be said here, and that having to do with the eucharistic prayer maranatha, which we discussed in chapter two. Higgins tells us:

In the promise of the Lord, 'I will come again' (14:3, 18, 28) is reflected the eager expectation cherished by the Church of his return in glory at the Parousia and the conviction that this was anticipated in his gracious presence at the breaking of the bread. Of course, in the Fourth Gospel the hope of the Lord's return is bound up with the sending of the Paraclete; but we may say that the early eucharistic petition maranatha, 'Our Lord, come' finds its place in this eucharistic framework of the farewell discourses in the form of

¹⁰⁵Clark, p. 55. (See Clark for further citations)

Christ's response, so to speak to the appeal of his friends that he should return to them.¹⁰⁶

IV. The Spear-thrust, 19:34

"But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water." (John 19:34)

The Eucharist is now possible! The Christ has now been glorified; He is dead. The Eucharist is founded, on or 'flowed from the death of Christ'.¹⁰⁷ The Eucharist derives its efficacy from the operation of the Spirit. After or with the death of Christ the Spirit is given. We may compare¹⁰⁸ this with I John 5:6-7, "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth."

¹⁰⁶Higgins, p. 85.

¹⁰⁷Higgins, p. 87; Goguel, p. 462.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE BODY OF CHRIST

"Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body for we all partake of the same loaf."

I Corinthians 10:17
R.S.V.

In this chapter on the Body of Christ, we shall not be discussing the Church in the New Testament. The Church is often referred to in the New Testament as the Body of Christ, but the Body is certainly not the only image of the Church in the New Testament. Paul S. Minear has pointed out no less than ninety-six images of the Church in the New Testament.¹⁰⁹ As Minear illustrates, the phrase the body of Christ is "not a single expression with an unchanging meaning. Paul's thought remains extremely flexible and elastic. Here the term "body" has one meaning; there it has quite another."¹¹⁰ It will not be within the scope and limitation of this chapter to examine all the meanings of the image of the body. Rather, we shall try to restrict ourselves to the relationship between "the body" and the Eucharist.

¹⁰⁹Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia, 1960), pp. 268-269.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 173.

We need to have some inter-related understanding of the Church as God's people, the New Creation, the Community of the Holy Spirit, and the Body of Christ. Ecclesia is the New Testament word for Church. Minear tells us that although ecclesia "was used primarily to designate a particular communal reality, not to describe its qualitative aspects" and "was relatively neutral and colorless, conveying by itself little theological meaning," it was nevertheless used to convey several basic meanings: an assembly of persons which has been summoned for a particular purpose, a community of believers which has been gathered from the inhabitants of a specific area, a community gathered by God through Christ, and the eschatological people of God.¹¹¹

The Church was a Christocentric community because its nature was qualified by the nature of Christ;¹¹² it was His body so completely was its nature bound up with His.

We are all members of that body which was nailed to the cross, laid in the tomb and raised to life on the third day. There is only one organism of the new creation: and we are members of that one organism, which is Christ.¹¹³

To be the Body of Christ means to be in Christ:

Behind the metaphor of the body stands the conception of participation in Christ, or life in and

¹¹¹Paul Minear, "Idea of the Church," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York, 1962), I, pp. 607-608.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 116.

¹¹³J. A. T. Robinson, The Body (London, 1957), p. 52f.

with Christ, and on this the notion of the body essentially depends, for our relation to one another in the church derives from our relation to Christ.¹¹⁴

To be the Body of Christ was to put on Christ, to be in Christ was to manifest a quality of "life-in-mutuality,"¹¹⁵ both with God in Christ and with one's neighbor in community.

To put on Christ meant to put on love... To enter into this body is to become clothed with Christ's compassion for men, as well as to become so mined that one acts toward these men as toward Christ (Col. 3:12-17). The body is the realm of mutual forgiveness and mutual concern in which each person gives priority to the other's needs.¹¹⁶

Therefore, we see a social as well as personal dimension to life in Christ.

This participation in Christ is literal, not figurative; the fellowship is called the Body of Christ ontologically, not metaphorically. This is true because, "what God has given to the world in Christ is something different, an actual humanity, a real presence of God in human history... God made man calling men into fellowship with himself."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Claude Welch, The Reality of the Church (New York, 1958), p. 151.

¹¹⁵ Minear, Images, p. 244.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 245.

¹¹⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, The Household of God (New York, 1954), p. 56.

God having taken humanity upon himself, (Phil. 2:7), does not divest himself of it; the resurrection and ascension do not terminate the incarnation. Rather God, having taken humanity upon himself, transforms this humanity and makes it new, a humanity which transcends death; and it is this new humanity which is offered to the people of God through their participation in the Body of Christ.

The incarnation has a beginning but no ending. The Christ who rises from the dead does not shed his humanity but lives (the resurrection of the body) and is so present to men. He continues to bind men into himself, into the fulness of his humanity, not by dissolving their humanity into his but in the nearness of his individuality which forms and shapes their manhood.¹¹⁸

Thus, the Body of Christ becomes so by putting on Christ's humanity, the humanity which is His "on the other side of death", which Christ did not leave behind and in which He is present to men, the humanity and individuality the nearness of which forms and shapes the humanity of the body of Christ. Perhaps this is what Paul meant by the terms "in Christ" and "with Christ." And it is the reason "we regard no one from a human point of view... If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come." (II Cor. 5:16-17) The members of the Body are no longer regarded from a human point of view because individually (Baptism) and corporately, (the Eu-

¹¹⁸Welch, p. 158.

charist), they have begun to put on Christ's resurrection --humanity, the new humanity which is a new level of existence because it transcends death. Therefore, because "participation in Christ Jesus is participation in an order wherein eternal life rules",¹¹⁹ the people of God have been made a new creation, which is the Body of Christ, and "are the beginnings of a real continuation of his redeeming work, an extension of the divine humanity--though in a different mode--through history, until its consummation at his coming again."¹²⁰

It is in this sense of participating ontologically in the humanity of the risen Christ that we can speak of being the Body of Christ in more than a metaphorical sense. And this is possible because the deepest meaning and significance of the resurrection from the dead is that there is now a new humanity (II Cor. 5:16-17), a humanity above and beyond death, this is the resurrection--humanity of the risen Christ, and it is above and beyond death because death is confined to our present humanity, our present condition which is the body of sin, death and corruption. This new humanity is fully realizable only at the Parousia, when Christ shall come again and the whole of creation is

¹¹⁹Minear, Images, p. 175.

¹²⁰Newbigin, pp. 56-7.

reconciled and united with the Creator and God is all in all. Paul expressed the connection between the two humanities or natures in these terms:

What you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel... But God gives it a body as he has chosen... So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.¹²¹

Paul while speaking of what is sown; is thinking of birth.

The soul of man is planted like a seed into the mortal conditions under which it manifests itself in this life. To that extent it is subject to change and decay and all the mishaps and limitations of a merely physical existence... It is the soul, the non-spiritual personality, that is sown. But it is the spiritual man, the "new creation" in Christ (II Cor. 5:17), who is to be raised at the resurrection.¹²²

Paul's terms for the two humanities are the "physical (or natural) body" (the incarnation--humanity of Christ) and the "spiritual body" (the resurrection--humanity of Christ), and the latter is participated in as the Body of Christ. When we say the Church is the Body of Christ in an ontological sense, we refer not to Christ's physical body, but to the spiritual body.

There is a body of the flesh and there is a spiritual body. The body of the flesh is that

¹²¹I Cor. 15.

¹²²John Short, "Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians," The Interpreter's Bible (New York, 1953) pp. 247-248.

wherein Christ came at his incarnation and wrought our atonement on the cross. The spiritual body (I Cor. 15:44) is that in which he was raised from the dead and lives forever, and not only so, but that in which he gives life to those who believe in him.¹²³

Therefore, we cannot speak only of an "extension of the incarnation" when referring to the Church as the Body of Christ. The Church as the Body of Christ refers to the fruit of the incarnation, the spiritual body.

The Body of Christ is not a natural body. But neither on the other hand is it an ideal body separable from the actual visible life of the Christian fellowship in the world. It is a spiritual body, the Body of Christ--the last Adam who has become a life-giving Spirit. This life-giving spiritual power is now at work in us quickening our mortal bodies. Thereby, though the outward man is decaying, the new, inward man in us is being renewed day by day, while we wait for the consummation, the resurrection of the body wherein what is mortal will be swallowed up in life.¹²⁴

It is in this way that the Church can be called the Body of Christ in an ontological sense. The Church is the Body of Christ in that it is "the physical complement and extension of the one and the same Person and Life".¹²⁵ Welch points out that that Person:

...comes to us not only through the mediation of historical memory and the outworking of his new humanity in the intertexture of the community which

¹²³Newbigin, p. 72.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 75

¹²⁵Robinson, p. 51.

he formed, but in his immediate presence as the risen and ascended one, freed from the physical limitations of space and time... Through the Spirit, i.e. by the working of the Spirit in us as the ground of our response... we share in his life in a way decisive for the being of ourselves... The new humanity of the Christian man is formed and constituted as a joining with a sharing in, and dependence upon the God-manhood of the risen Christ.¹²⁶

Now we must examine the relationship between the physical and spiritual bodies. What is the fundamental identity between the two bodies; how can they be the same and yet different? Murdoch Dahl argues that while the resurrected body is not materially identical with the one we now possess; it will be what Dahl calls somatically identical. This "somatic identity" is in contrast to the traditional view which he calls heterosomatism: "that, though Christ had a real body after his resurrection, it was not the same body that he had when he hung on the cross and which was laid in the tomb. Likewise, Christians in the general resurrection will not have their physical bodies restored in a glorified form, but will be provided with new ones like their Lord's."¹²⁷

Dahl's terms for the two natures or types of humanity are the body-animate ("a living soul made capable of eter-

¹²⁶Welch, pp. 160-161.

¹²⁷Murdoch Dahl, The Resurrection of the Body (London, 1962), p. 8.

nal life but able to fall back towards the Void, into corruption"), and the body-spiritual ("A personality completely controlled and informed by the creative spirit of God and therefore beyond corruption").¹²⁸

The scripture puts it this way 'Adam (the first man) was made a living soul (i.e., a body-animate, a totality made alive by the creator spirit, but capable either of corruption or of eternal life); but the last Adam (the second man) is created a life-giving spirit.' That is to say, his ultimate destiny is to be a totality not simply animated by the spirit (which might be said of other kinds of 'flesh'), but a totality taken up into the life of the Spirit himself, so that the whole totality is so controlled and possessed by the Spirit that it shares his life-giving powers.¹²⁹

Therefore, to be in Christ is to put off the body-animate (the old man) and to put on the body-spiritual (the new creation), which is the resurrection-humanity of the risen Christ; it is to be ontologically the Body of Christ. The paradox is that:

We belong both to the generation of Adam and to the generation of Christ... We have been incorporated into Christ which means that in us Christ, who has conquered death, is triumphing over corruption. That means that in the age to come we shall share in the resurrection life. But we are still 'corruption'; we still sin...there is in our Christian life here and now an inescapable tension between the old man and the new. (Cf. Rom. 6:6, Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9, Rom. 7:22, II Cor. 4:16).¹³⁰

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 81.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 83.

Here is the crux of Dahl's argument as to the identity between the two humanities or natures. If we can be a new creation in Christ while yet remaining in the old humanity, (i.e. if we "belong both to the generation of Adam and to the generation of Christ"), then our nature, our humanity will be the same after the final resurrection:

Though Christ has completely changed us, we are yet the same people as we were before we believed; so we shall be the same people in the final resurrection, though wonderfully altered in accordance with the regeneration that has taken place in us (the traditional exegesis misunderstands the idea of a new existence, so that it comes to imply a completely new nature altogether) The whole totality of human nature will be lifted right out of the time of this age into the time of the age to come... a change-over by God's sovereign power from one mode of existence into another.¹³¹

In other words, there is no reason why God should not restore our whole nature in a different sphere of existence, but in a form analogous to its present one. This analogous form is not any material identity but rather is a somatic identity:

'Body' in Paul means the whole personality. Hence, it is vital to insist on the word identity as describing this relationship, because the whole idea has no meaning unless it is the same personality that is to be raised that exists now.¹³²

This is precisely what we observe if we examine the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. There is no doubt

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 83-84.

¹³²Ibid., p. 94.

that Jesus appeared in bodily form. He was capable of eating, but he was unhindered by physical restrictions or conditions. He was somatically identical, but not materially identical with that totality of human nature and the unified personality which had been his during his life on earth.

Here we should say a word about the close relationship between Body and Spirit. Minear tells us that:

"Spirit" was one of those terms which expressed the ontological ultimacy of the new age. It was God's own life-giving Spirit, active everywhere in creation and in redemption... For Paul, the body was quite inseparable from "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"... to be one body in Christ was nothing else but being one Spirit with him.¹³³

We can now understand Newbigin's succinct summary of this Pauline teaching.

...the Christian life is life in the Body of Christ, a life which involves the identification of ourselves with His death and resurrection, in faith, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The Body of Christ, of which we are thus made members, is not a natural body. But neither, on the other hand, is it an ideal body separable from the actual visible life of the Christian fellowship in the world. It is a spiritual body, the Body of Christ--the last Adam who has become a life-giving Spirit. This life-giving spiritual power is now at work in us quickening our mortal bodies. Thereby, though the outward man is decaying, the new, inward man in us is being renewed day by day, while we wait for the consummation, the resurrection of the body wherein what is mortal will be swallowed up in life. Our bodies are even now made members of Christ, and His body thus functions through the

¹³³Welch, p. 153.

mutually interdependent service of the members in the ordinary life of the Church, through preaching, prophecy, teaching, miracles, healing, and so on. The visible center of this common life is the common sharing in the Lord's Supper in which the members are made participants in His Body and Blood.¹³⁴

Robinson points out that Paul himself directly grounded "the unity of the Church as the Body of Christ in the sacramental loaf, itself already declared to be the Body of the Lord: 'Because there is one loaf, we, that are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.'" (I Cor. 10:17)¹³⁵

Also it should be noted that "the words of institution at the Last Supper, "This is my body; contain the only instance of a quasi-theological use of the word which is certainly pre-Pauline."¹³⁶ This of course agrees with our conclusions in chapter one that it formed part of the tradition in which Paul had been instructed by men.

The whole phrase, 'this is my body...my blood...' means that Jesus is making over to His followers 'till He come' His actual self, His life and personality. In so far, then, as the Christian community feeds on this body and blood, it becomes the very life and personality of the risen Christ.¹³⁷

¹³⁵Robinson, p. 56.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 57

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The Last Supper was a rehearsal for the resurrection meals and more especially for the Messianic Banquet. There are problems involved with claiming that either the Pauline or Markan version is more primitive. Neither represents the exact words of Christ at the Last Supper, and both are modifications of the earliest liturgical usage. The majority of the evidence points to the fact that the Last Supper was an ordinary Jewish meal. We cannot objectively identify the Last Supper with a passover, kiddish, or haburah meal. Passover ideas were in the minds of the disciples, but the full theological significance of the Last Supper cannot be deduced from the Passover. Although the haburah provides us with a possible form and structure, the content was something entirely new. All the rudimentary beginnings of future eucharistic concepts are to be found in the Last Supper. Paul's concept of the Body of Christ, John's concept of the eating of the flesh and the promise of the Spirit, the concept of the future Messianic Banquet, the concepts of presence, covenant, and fellowship--all have traces within the Last Supper.

The Risen Lord's Easter meals were the initial cause

of the early Eucharist. If there had been no resurrection, then neither the recollection of the daily meals taken with Jesus during His lifetime nor the recollection of the Last Supper would explain the joy which filled the hearts of first believers united for the 'breaking of bread' as described in Acts 2:46.

The two essential elements in the resurrection appearance meals were the presence of Christ and the fellowship of those who experienced that presence at a meal.

The earliest eucharistic meals were in fact ordinary meals, and the presence of the Risen Christ was experienced in the midst of the assembly of the faithful, in a non-material form, each time they united for a common meal. At these early Eucharists the spirit is the same Christ present as the flesh in the eucharistic bread. John's use of flesh instead of body is connected with the anti-docetic purpose of the Gospel. Also it might have been possible that John used a branch of tradition where the eucharistic words were flesh and blood, and these no doubt would have been more suitable to his purpose.

John's teaching is that the Christ, who became flesh and lived upon earth, is identical with the Christ who is present in the Eucharist; whereas, Paul teaches that body-physical is different from the body-spiritual even though the identity remains the same. Nevertheless, the difference

between John's flesh and Paul's body cannot easily be reconciled and both will not fit into Paul's concept of the Body.

John tells us that it is in and through the flesh that the Spirit works. Only when Jesus is glorified can the Spirit be given, for the Spirit is the gift of the ascended Christ.

Paul derived his concept of the Body from the resurrection and applied it to the Eucharist because he received the tradition that the bread of the Eucharist was Christ's Body. The Church as the Body of Christ is Christ's resurrection-humanity, the new humanity which is a new level of existence because it transcends death. Death is confined to our present humanity, our present condition, which is the body of sin, death, and corruption. The new humanity is fully realizable only at the Parousia when Christ shall come again. The Body of Christ is the beginning of a real continuation of His redeeming work, an extension of the divine humanity until its consummation at His coming again.

By the working of the Spirit in us as the ground of our response, we share in His life in a way decisive for the being of ourselves--as the Body of Christ. To be in Christ is to put off the body-animate (the old man) and to put on the body-spiritual (the new creation), which is the resurrection-humanity of the Risen Christ; it is to be ontologically the Body of Christ. The paradox exists because

we belong both to the generation of Adam (body-animate) and to the generation of Christ (body-spiritual).

God will restore our whole nature in a different sphere of existence, but in a form analogous to its present one. This analogous form is not any material identity, but rather is somatic identity.

We are members of the Body of Christ, and His Body functions through the mutually interdependent life of the Church. The center of this common life is focused in the Eucharist where the members are made participants in His Body and Blood.

The institutional phrase of the Last Supper, 'this is my body...my blood...', means that Christ is making us over into Himself, until the second coming. When the Church feeds on this body and blood at the Eucharist, it becomes the very Body of the Risen Christ.

The Eucharist should become the central act of Christian worship to be done with 'glad and generous hearts' in all churches today in order that the Church may become 'one Body in Christ'.

DO THIS - WITH JOY - UNTIL HE COMES

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